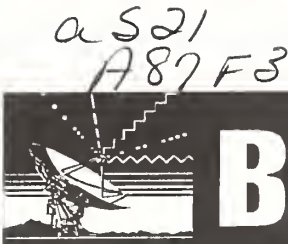


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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2697

January 20, 1995

FLOOD DAMAGE IN CALIFORNIA -- Acting Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger joined federal and California officials (January 13) to survey flood damage and ensure USDA is assisting where it is needed most. Rominger said, "We are on site to evaluate the situation and to determine how we can help victims survive and recover from this disaster. We want to help now, and we will be here for the long haul, to make sure flood victims can get back on their feet as quickly as possible." Assessments of damages and needs will be updated continually as storm systems and rains persist. When the rains stop and flood waters recede, damage assessments will continue. USDA agencies are prepared to respond with assistance such as emergency food assistance, emergency loans, and damage estimates. **Contact: Johna Pierce (202) 720-1691.**

E-COLI OUTBREAK ANNIVERSARY -- On the second anniversary of the West coast E-coli outbreak that killed several people, the Under Secretary for Food Safety, Michael Taylor, issued a statement expressing regret. He said, "The events of two years ago will be remembered always by the families who suffered the excruciating and irreplaceable loss of a child or other loved one or experienced serious illness as a result of ground beef contaminated with E.coli 0157:H7. Many Americans share that memory and the sense of regret and unnecessary loss that the memory brings." He said the event provided the impetus for change needed in detecting foodborne illnesses on our meat and poultry supply. He also said that while positive steps have been taken, such as zero tolerance of contaminated ground beef, there is still more to be done. He called for a "systematic, science-based prevention of harmful contamination into the operation of every meat and poultry plant, and we must hold the industry accountable for meeting its food safety responsibility." **Contact: Jerry Redding (202) 720-6959.**

TECHNOLOGY GAINS -- Research projects between Department of Agriculture laboratories and private companies increased by 28 percent last year. Projects such as a spraying system for poultry processing to reduce microbial contamination, and developing biodegradable, water resistant coatings made from 100 percent potato or corn starch were among the 91 projects partnered by USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). That brings the total number of these Cooperative Research and Development Agreements to more than 400 since the signing of the 1986 Technology Transfer Act 1986. ARS administrator R. Dean Plowman says, "These partnerships are finding new uses for agricultural products, stimulating rural development and national trade, and bringing solutions to problems faced by food and fiber producers." **Contact: Bruce Kinzel (301) 344-2781.**

RECORD HOG PRODUCTION -- USDA economists are predicting record high pork production for 1995. Expansion is expected to continue through the third quarter, and then drop slightly as the March-May pig crop reaches slaughter weight. But fourth quarter production is expected to be the second largest on record. While lower slaughter supplies in mid-December restored prices to mid \$30 per cwt, first quarter prices for 1995 are only expected to average near \$36 due to large supplies. Imports of pork are expected to fall this year, and lower sales of pork to Mexico are expected to result in lower pork export sales. **Contact: Steve Reed (202) 219-1285.**

WINTER FOOD SAFETY -- Winter storms can pack enough of a punch to knock your lights out. If you lose power during a winter storm, Bessie Berry, the acting director of USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline, says you should be very careful about food safety. Among the recommendations are to keep your refrigerator or freezer closed. If the power comes back on within four hours, your food should be safe. If it takes longer than four hours for power to return, discard all refrigerated perishables such as meat and poultry, dairy products, eggs, soft cheeses and mayonnaise, says Berry. In addition, she recommends throwing out anything containing cooked meat or dairy products. She says butter and margarine, fresh fruits and vegetables, and hard cheeses can be kept as long as they look and smell fine. Fruit juices should be fine until they ferment, which usually takes a few days. If you have a free standing freezer that's half full, you'll want to bunch the foods together to keep them colder longer. A well stocked freezer will keep foods at a safe temperature for 48 hours. A half-full freezer may keep items cold up to 24 hours. If the food in your freezer thaws, but is still cold, Berry says it's safe to refreeze them. Call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline with your food safety questions at (800)535-4555. **Contact: Bessie Berry (202)720-5604.**

BEETLES QUARANTINED -- USDA has quarantined Adams and Jay counties in Indiana for pine shoot beetles, bringing the total number of quarantined counties in the states of Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York to 118. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Deputy Administrator B. Glen Lee said, "This action is necessary on an emergency basis to prevent the pine shoot beetle from spreading to non-infested areas of the United States." Quarantine regulations restrict the movement of cut pine Christmas trees, pine nursery stock, pine logs and lumber with bark attached, pine stumps and pine bark chips. Lumber and logs without bark attached are not regulated. Adult pine shoot beetles feed on new shoots of healthy pine trees, causing stunted and distorted growth, and they are carriers of several pine tree diseases. Pine shoot beetle damage to trees can cause economic losses to the timber, Christmas tree and nursery industries. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 436-3256.**

DATE POSTPONED -- USDA is postponing the effective date of the final rule for packaging and labeling of veterinary biological products. That date moves from February 21, 1995 to August 19, 1995. John Payne, acting director of the Biotechnology, Biologics and Environmental Protection Staff said, "The final rule assures that the product is properly labelled by prohibiting the repackaging and relabeling, for further sale or distribution, of final containers of product that are imported or that are packaged at licensed establishments in cartons or other containers." On April 28, 1993, USDA published a proposed rule on the packaging and labeling of veterinary biologics. The final rule was published on August 24, 1994, with the effective date to have been 180 days after the date of its publication or February 21, 1995. Since the publication of the final rule, APHIS has received in excess of 400 letters and inquiries. Based on the large number of letters and inquiries, it was determined that additional time was necessary to allow business arrangements to be formed between producers and distributors of veterinary biologics. **Contact: Cynthia A. Eck (301) 436-5931.**

FAX -- You can obtain our radio and TV programming information and the **Broadcasters Letter** through your facsimile machine by calling USDA's AgNewsFax. Use the telephone connected to your FAX machine to call **(202) 690-3944**. At voice prompts press **1**, press **4**, then to receive **Broadcasters Letter**, press **9200**; radio newslines information, press **9250**; TV contents billboard, press **9260**; TV scripts, press **9270**. After all your selections, then press **#**, press **3**, and press the **start** button on your FAX machine.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1964 -- Finding common ground in Los Angeles is the focus of this edition of Agriculture USA. Gary Crawford reports on small community gardens that are thriving amidst neighborhoods torn apart by riots, earthquakes, poverty, crime and social upheaval. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary).

CONSUMER TIME # 1445 -- Mild winter underway; strength training and bone density; zinc, boron and our health; "el dente" wheat; urban gardens in Los Angeles; a "little boy" causes big mischief in weather patterns. (Weekly cassette -- 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1955 -- Goat control; jellyfish gene transfer; state agricultural credit programs on the rise; boom times for cotton; record hog production expected in 1995. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, January 25, crop values. Thursday, January 26, peanut stocks. Friday, January 27, cattle on feed. Monday, January 30, poultry production. Tuesday, January 31, ag prices; crop and weather update; world tobacco outlook. Wednesday, February 1, U.S. horticultural export situation; catfish production. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURE -- Feature, B-roll and actualities on California's recovery from the floods.

UPCOMING FEATURE -- Lynn Wyvill reports on ground beef food safety.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

*Galaxy 7, Transponder 9, Channel 9, Audio 6.2 or 6.8, Downlink frequency 3880 Mhz.
Available on Thursdays 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., EDT; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., EDT.*

*Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.
Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.*

OFF MIKE

PORK CRUSADE DAY...was celebrated December 21 by **Bob Quinn** and **Lee Kline** (WHO, Des Moines, IA) along with other radio station staff as a promotion to help the nation's hog producers move some of the bountiful pork supply off supermarket shelves. For 12 hours, they talked about the merits of pork through unsponsored public service messages, interviews and call-in reports. One supermarket reported sales of 4,000 pounds of pork that day. Normally, they'd sell 200 pounds. **Herb Plambeck**, a radio veteran for 59 years, reported that WHO's "Pork Crusade" moved countless thousands of pounds of the "other white meat" into kitchens and refrigerators of Midwest homes which otherwise might not have been sold.

ANNUAL AG EXPO AND FARM FORUM...was held in Spokane, WA this week, reports **Wey Simpson** (KAQQ, Spokane, WA and KCLX, Colfax, WA). Wey said they've experienced unseasonably mild winter weather thus far and are getting a lot of moisture for crops. Snowpack is above normal for a change.

AG CO-OP EXPANSIONS...continue in Minnesota, according to **Lynn Ketelsen** (Linder Farm Network, Willmar, MN). Minnesota Corn Processors is planning a \$100 million expansion in their operations using corn to make ethanol and corn sweeteners. Another ag co-op, Phoenix Manufacturing, is making wood substitutes out of soybeans and recycled newspapers. The product looks like polished marble. Lynn has been helping ag cooperatives grow in his state for many years. Also, he's been busy promoting the importance of Future Farmers of America Chapters which seem to be on the rebound in his state.

ENDING 30 YEARS...of Federal service, **Will Pemble** of USDA's Agricultural Research Service plans to retire March 3. A reception is planned for March 2 from 2-4:00 p.m. in Beltsville, MD to celebrate Will's significant and long-time contributions to the broadcasting community. You're welcome to send letters, audio or videotapes honoring his career by February 24 to: Norma Moore, 6303 Ivy Lane, Room 400, Greenbelt, MD 20770. Call (301) 344-2152 for details.

Larry A. Quinn

LARRY A. QUINN, Director
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center



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